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POLLIE'S DOWNS



1489 · f. 1572.

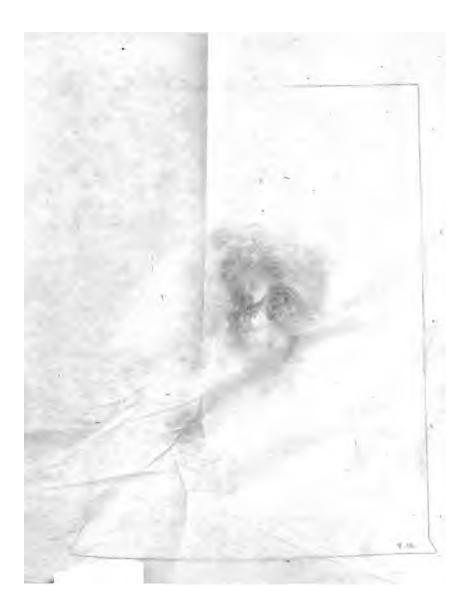




TINE POLLEGY ARS AND



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TINY POLLIE'S UPS AND DOWNS.



By MINN,

AUTHOR OF "NEDDIE'S CARE; OR, SUFFER THE LITTLE CHILDREN."

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JOSEPH MASTERS, 78, NEW BOND STREET.

1872.

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TINY POLLIE'S UPS AND DOWNS.

CHAPTER I.

"Who says the widow's heart must break,
The childless mother sink?—
A kinder, truer voice L hear,
Which e'en beside that mournful bier
Whence parents' eyes would hopeless shrink,

"Bids weep no more—O heart bereft,
How strange to thee that sound!
A widow o'er her only son
Feeling more bitterly alone
For friends that press officious round."

KEBLE.

In the south of England, on the outskirts of, I know not whether to call it a small town or a large village, stands a row of pretty cottages, about six in number, each with its little flower-garden in front, and a larger one for vegetables at the back. These are the almshouses be-

longing to Wendale, (which you know is only a mile or two distant from Edgedale,) and very comfortable little houses they are, as any one of the six old women who live there will tell you.

They all had some one to live with them, and look after them, except one, who according to her own account, had no relations in the world, but one son, and his wife and child. Widow Linnet, as she was called, had lost her husband many years before, and her only child, a son, having chosen to be a sailor, she had lived alone for so long, that she had become used to it, and preferred it now that her hard-working days were over.

At a seaport town in England her son had married, but as it was situated at some distance from Wendale, the widow had only seen her daughter-in-law and little grandchild on one occasion, when her son brought them over for a few days, but this was three or four years ago now, when little Pollie was but two years old.

The neighbours were very good in seeing after the old woman; indeed the daughter of Mrs. Pagburn, from next door, looked in every morning on purpose to assist the widow in anything she could not manage by herself, which was not much, for being very independent, she did not like giving up any of her old ways unless positively obliged. "I'm not come to that yet awhile," she would say, "and,

please God, I shall bide a bit as I am for some time to come," so they let her have her own way, though she was daily getting more and more infirm.

It was a lovely afternoon in July, the sun came pouring in at the cottage door, lighting up all the objects within reach. The cups and saucers, plates and glasses sparkled as the rays came flashing across the dresser. The bright copper warming-pan shone almost like the sun himself, and the pins dotted all over the dear old-fashioned lace-making pillow at which the widow sat deftly working, glittered like little splinters of light, as the aged fingers moved them in rapid succession in that most mysterious of work.

It was a homely little scene,—the white-haired old woman at her picturesque employment, the large tabby cat rubbing herself against the leg of the table, the summer flowers on the window ledge, and the bright sunshine over all. Yet a few short hours and it had all changed. The lace pillow stood unheeded in the corner, the merry clatter of the bobbins was no longer heard, the cat had moved herself off, a queerly shaped bundle lay in the deep recesses of the widow's arm-chair, and the sun had so completely disappeared, that it was difficult to realise his ever visiting that little home with his rays,—for a great sorrow had crept in at that open door and changed it all for ever.

The widow had been sitting, as I have already described,

at her lace-making, calmly contented, exchanging a word now and then through the doorway with the chance passersby, and resting occasionally to enjoy a quiet chat with one or other of her neighbours who were constantly dropping in, when the distant sound of wheels caused her to shade her eyes from the sunlight, the better to discern who the new comer might be.

Imagine then her surprise when the covered cart which came lumbering along stopped exactly opposite her own little garden gate, and the carter raising his voice asked,

- "Be these the almshouses, missus?"
- "Yes, they be," she replied.
- "Oh, then, will you kindly tell me which be Widow Linner's?"
- "Sure and I will," answered the old woman, trotting down the neat little garden path; "I'm Widow Linnet, at your service. What may you please to want?"

The man was busily occupied while she was speaking in taking something out of the cart, and his only reply was to place a muffled up little bundle in her arms.

"Why, what ever's this, man?" she cried; "I don't expect nothing nor nobody by the cart."

"It's the child, missus," he curtly remarked. "What, don't you know nothing about her?" he added in surprise. "You'll may be find it all out by this," and after fumbling a

little in his coat pocket, he produced a letter which he handed to her, and proceeded to drag out of the cart a small seaman's chest, which he carried into the cottage.

"Oh, dear! oh, dear! what do it all mean?" gasped the poor old woman; "Oh, Liz'beth! Mrs. Pagburn, do'ee come here!"

"Well, I must be off now, missus, good afternoon; she's a good little lass," and so saying, the carter cracked his whip, and was soon out of sight.

The cottage was immediately full of people, all the inhabitants of the almshouses, as well as two or three others besides, crowded to the spot. It is always so.

In the meanwhile the little slumbering bundle remained unnoticed amidst the excitement which followed the reading of this letter.

"Sea-weed Harbour, " Fuly 17th, 18-...

"Mrs. Linnet,

"I take this pen in hand to tell you sad news. Your son, Jack Linnet, were drownded by accident as he were coming home from his last voyage, and his body were not found, though every pains was took for to do so. I am sorry to say this ain't all. Mrs. Linnet, poor dear, were ailing at the time, and being told the news in a sudden,

thoughtless sort of a way, (which same, them as did it ought to be ashamed of theirselves,) that get over it she couldn't; but we give her a decent burial, with me and Kelly and the little girl to follow. I have put together such things as were left after paying for expenses, which same is done honest, I give you my word, and ask anybody if Martha Kelly don't bear a good name. Hoping this will find you as well as, thank God, it leaves me at present,

"I am your humble servant,

"MARTHA KELLY.

"P.S.—Me and Kelly would have liked to keep Pollie, but means is small, and our family a large one."

For a moment there was silence after the reading of the letter, and then there was a sound of weeping in that room, where everything had looked so pleasant.

"Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

CHAPTER II.

"The heart of childhood is all mirth,
We frolic to and fro
As free and blithe, as if on earth
Were no such thing as woe."

Christian Year.

"LET her be," the widow said, when at last some one thought of the child, "she's asleep, pretty dear, and would be frightened, I'm thinking, to see so many strange faces by." And so they let her be, and never noticed in the fast gathering twilight that a pair of bright brown eyes were taking in all that was going on with the greatest interest.

When a short time later, the widow's sympathising friends left her, she was considerably startled to hear, as the door closed after the last, a very wide-awake little voice remark,

"I'm not asleep, Granny, and I haven't been for ever so long. They won't come back, will they?"

"Why, my darling! my boy's little darling! come to your own old Granny!" and the old woman's tears flowed afresh.

"Yes, Granny, but-oh, please, won't you stop crying?

it frightens me rather, and I think I'll—go to sleep again." And Pollie, who had advanced a few steps across the room, turned and fled in a very sudden fashion, and could not be prevailed upon to leave the friendly shelter of the large armchair, till hunger induced her, at the sight of bread and butter when tea time came.

It was astonishing to see the effect it had on her; with the third slice of bread and butter, and the second cup of weak tea, her shyness had all vanished, and she imparted the strangest of information on all subjects between every mouthful.

"Mrs. Kelly says butter is dearer than ever,—oh, look, there's mother's picture! do you know I went and buried her? Oh, I did. I wish you wouldn't cry, Granny. Is it 'cos of father? Mother didn't cry, not then, she got very white, like this teacup, and then she was ill, and next time I saw her, she was whiter ever so much,—and Mrs. Kelly said she was dead. I cried a good deal,—it makes me cry now if I think about it, so I won't.—Oh, that cat's got a face just like Sophy Warren; you know, she keeps a shop where you buy candles and sweets."

"Why, my deary, how old be you? not above six, I'm thinking."

"I'm five; my birthday was last Tuesday fortnight. Granny, please, I'm tired, I want to go to bed." And tired she was indeed, and the brown eyes found it difficult work to keep open during the operation of undressing, and she could hardly lisp the few words of her tiny prayer without going off to sleep almost as she knelt. Then all being as quiet as before the appearance of the little orphan, the widow sat down again to ponder and weep over the sad change which had come into her life.

"As long as I've bread to put in her mouth," she said to herself, "I don't fear but what we shall get on well, and for the rest, 'the LORD will provide;' she will soon be old enough to do a bit of work for herself, she's sharp enough for anything, is Pollie."

There was no doubt about it, she was as sharp as a needle, and as the days went by, proved herself able to help her grandmother in many ways, young as she was.

It was about a week after her arrival that Pollie one day remarked that she thought she should like to go to school, like the little children who lived a little lower down the lane.

The old woman shook her head mournfully, "I can't afford it no how," she said.

"Are you so very poor, Granny?"

"No, my deary, not so very poor; I've enough for you and me, thank GoD."

"Is it the rent, Granny? Mother said it made a great way with the money."

- "No, my dear, I don't have nothing to pay for living here."
- "Oh—Have you got a bad arm? and have Mrs. Pagburn, and Mrs. Luke, and all the others too?"
- "Bad arms! no, deary; why what ever could make you think such a thing as that?"
- "Oh, I thought you said these were called armshouses. There was a blind hospital near us at Seaweed Harbour, you know, and all the blind people lived in it, and didn't have to pay anything at all, mother said."
- "You'll have to be careful what you say before her, Mrs. Linnet," said Elizabeth Pagburn, who had come in a minute or two before, and heard the last few words.
- "Ah, indeed I shall, 'Lizbeth; did you ever hear the like of that?"
- "May I come in?" asked a fresh clear voice at the door, and a bright face appeared in the doorway.
- "Surely," answered the old woman. "I be right down glad to see you, Miss Glencairne; take a seat, do, my dear, excusing the liberty."
- "Thank you, I will," she replied. "Oh, please don't let me disturb anybody," she continued, as Elizabeth, after dusting a chair, proceeded to leave the cottage.
 - "Thank you, ma'm, but I was just going."
- "And how be poor dear little Miss Clare to-day? do the heat try her much?" asked the widow.

- "Thank you, I think she is very much the same; she likes so much being able to have her window open to feel the little air that is stirring, though she does not seem to mind the heat either."
 - "Dear lamb! I hope as how it'll do her good."
- "Yes, I hope so too. Why, whom have you there? I don't remember ever seeing that little girl before," she added, as Pollie peeped cautiously out from behind her grandmother's chair.
- "Oh, miss, what haven't you heard?" and the old woman with many tears told her sad story to the sympathizing young lady.
- "And now," said the latter, when the widow had concluded, "what do you mean to do with Pollie, poor child? will you send her to school?"
- "We was just speaking of it when you came in, Miss Edna, but I'm afeard I can't just at present,—after a bit may be I shall manage it."
- "I think it might be arranged in another way; shall I tell you what I mean? Well, I always make a rule of sending a certain number to school, and I have one too few on my list just now, so, if you like, I shall be very glad to put Pollie's name down."
- "Thank you many, many times, miss, I'm sure I shouldn't know how to be grateful enough; I'm not much of a scholard

myself, but many's the time I've wished as I was. There, my deary, thank the lady for it."

"Does she mean I'm to go to school, Granny?" whispered Pollie, who had got a shy fit on.

"Yes, my deary, she do. She's a-going to send you her-self; say, 'Thank you,' my dear."

"Thank you, my dear," said Pollie gravely, but there was nevertheless a merry twinkle in her eyes, as she hid them in her grandmother's lap.

"Pollie, Pollie, I never meant you for to say that," cried the widow; "why you had ought to have called the lady 'miss.'"

"Oh, never mind," said Miss Glencairne, laughing; "what an amusing little mite she is. Well, I must be going now, so good afternoon, Mrs. Linnet, and good-bye, tiny Pollie," she added, patting the child's head; "mind and get on well at school to-morrow, and tell the mistress I sent you."

CHAPTER III.

"Day for the others ever, but for me

For ever night! for ever night!"

LONGFELLOW.

WE will leave Widow Linnet and Pollie for a little while, and follow Edna Glencairne to her home. Imagine to yourself a large country house, standing in the midst of a park, over which, scattered far and wide, are herds of graceful deer, some resting beneath the shelter of those wide spreading forest trees, and some (the burning heat of the day over) browsing in the open space, and close by on either side of the road leading to the house.

Had Edna been a stranger, the pretty creatures would doubtless have bounded away at the sound of approaching footsteps, but now they merely raised their heads, and, seeing who it was, continued their evening meal with unabated enjoyment.

"Poor child," said Edna to herself, as she entered the house; "I hope she hasn't been very dull!" and she hurried up the broad staircase, and gently opening a door entered a prettily furnished apartment.

"Darling, have you been very lonely?" she said, advancing

to the side of a sofa, on which lay a little girl of about nine or ten years of age. This was little Clare, her only sister.

"No; but I'm very glad to see you back again—at least, I don't mean that—I'm very glad to have you back again. I so often forget," little Clare added plaintively.

The rays of the setting sun were streaming in at the window and dancing on the opposite wall; but to little Clare it was all darkness, there was no answering light in those blue-tinted eyes, for she was blind.

"I came home as quickly as I could," Edna said, seating herself on the sofa, so that the child might feel her quite near. "I wish I could take you about with me, all the time I am away I keep thinking of you."

"Don't mind it so much for me, Edna; I don't, you see, at least not so much as I did. Now tell me all about it."

"Well, in the first place, I went round my district, (clothing club day, you know,) and the people one and all asked after you. Tommy Perch, too, after a great deal of stammering, brought out of his pocket—a most unsafe place I should say—six bird's eggs, strung on a piece of string, and asked me to take them home for Miss Clare; here they are—and feel, there are none of them broken. Next I went to the almshouses; oh, I must tell you about Mrs. Linnet! Well, whom should I see there but a little tiny girl,

with very brown eyes, and very brown hair, and only about four or five years old."

"Oh, I know! she must be that funny little child Mrs. Linnet showed me once upon a time—oh, years ago, I should think—little Pollie she called her."

"Yes, you are quite right; it was the child Pollie. I'm glad you remember seeing her, I don't think that I ever saw her before. Oh, it is so sad! her father was drowned at sea, and her mother died of grief. Pollie will always live with her grandmother now. We know what it is to lose our mother, don't we, darling? we must try what we can do for tiny Pollie."

She was silent for a little while, and Clare crept closer to her. The black dresses they both wore were for their mother—their loss was still a very recent one.

After a few minutes had passed, during which the sun dropped down behind the distant woods, Edna went on with her little detailed account, which perhaps seems too trivial to record. Those however who know what illness is, will understand the value such narrations acquire. Actors in little every-day events have it in their power to bestow a kind of secondhand pleasure on the ailing ones who are forced to be hearers only, not doers.

"Well, I stayed there some time," Edna resumed, "and it came out that Mrs. Linnet can't afford to send Pollie to

school. I told her she should be one of the number I always send, but it occurred to me on my way home that you might like to have her for your little girl,—you could send her to school, and if you liked she might come and see you sometimes, she is such an amusing little thing that it would be something for you to do."

"Oh, I should like it!" she cried; "do bring her here to-morrow—will you?"

"Yes, if you like, dear. It won't do to have her here too often, you know, she might get spoilt—now and then won't hurt her. You haven't been alone long this afternoon, have you, darling?"

"Oh, no. Nella Vere came to see you not long after you left, and she stayed with me an hour I should think, and read 'Alice in Wonderland' to me. Then you know I had Marsden with me till she went down to her tea, and then I played on my harmonina—I wasn't at all dull. You didn't go to Church, did you?"

- "No, dear-I never do on districtizing days."
- "Oh, Edna! because of not leaving me, I know."
- "But dear, I don't consider it right to do both. I like coming back to you, my little Clare: I think you are much more my duty than even going to Church. If I neglected you for it I should go all wrong—I don't like leaving you so much as I do, but I can't help it sometimes."

At that moment Marsden (Clare's maid) appeared, and the dressing-bell ringing at the same time, Edna kissed her little blind sister saying, "I must be off now, and dress for dinner-I'll leave my door open so that I shall hear anything you say to me," and then she disappeared through the door leading into her room.

CHAPTER IV.

"To comfort, and to bless, To find a balm for woe. To tend the lone and fatherless Is angel's work below." Hymns Ancient and Modern.

"They watch o'er children in their rosy bloom, And o'er the trembling, desolate, and weak, With stricken mourners weeping at a tomb, With o'ercharged hearts that break."

E. BRINE.

OLLIE has come, Clare; will you have her up to see you directly?" Edna said, the following afternoon.

"Is she? Oh yes, directly!" Clare eagerly replied;

and so Edna went to fetch her, leaving Clare anxiously awaiting 'her little girl,' as she called her.

Coming up stairs however took a longer time than Clare had any reason to expect, for Pollie having that morning had her first lesson in learning to count, could not be persuaded to ascend the staircase without first counting every step as she went. Being new to mathematics, however, she got put out every now and then, and unwilling to take Edna's word at all in the matter, insisted each time on descending and re-ascending till she had settled it entirely to her satisfaction that there were just thirty-one steps to mount before reaching Clare's room. She looked on arriving there as if she would rather have liked to explore further in search of more stairs, but Edna opening the door changed the current of Pollie's thoughts, and a few minutes later she was causing great amusement to the sisters.

Just at first she became apparently overcome with shyness, and for exactly two minutes and a half sat perfectly motionless and to all appearance tongue-tied, at the extreme edge of the sofa, looking at Clare out of the corners of her eyes; but this did not last very long, and she soon found plenty to say for herself.

Her account of her adventures at school was very entertaining. Miss Cartwright, she said, had been very kind, but some of the 'children' were so troublesome that it was enough to make any one out of patience; and she was learning to back-stitch. She had known how to hem for a very long time, indeed she had worked every one of father's best pockethandkerchiefs—six there were, and each with a ship in the middle, except one, which had Lord Nelson instead.

Edna told her father that evening that she had not seen Clare look so bright for a long time, and he agreed with her in thinking that the new interest which had sprung up for her in the little girl might do her much good.

The distance from the Sunday-School to the almshouses being too great for Pollie to attend, it was arranged that she should go instead each Sunday afternoon to the Hall (which was much nearer) for an hour's instruction from Clare, and I do not know which of the two was most pleased with the proposed plan.

Pollie got on pretty well at school taking it altogether. She was a difficult child to manage, but Miss Cartwright from the first seemed to understand her perfectly, and under her tuition Pollie was daily improving. I am anxious that this little Pollie of mine should not be considered heartless because she so soon, after losing both father and mother, was merry and happy in her new life. She was very young, remember, and, far from being callous—of such a clinging, affectionate disposition, that wherever she went she attached herself to those around her; and it was well that it was so,

otherwise the little orphan child would have been indeed lonely, but it was impossible not to love her, and the widow did all in her power to fill her mother's place.

There were times however when even she was not sufficient, and Pollie roused from her sleep in the hours of the night, would call vainly for her dead mother. On these occasions it was no easy matter to comfort her, and it generally ended in her falling off to sleep again with the tears still upon her cheek.

As I have already said, Pollie (though so very small as to have gained for herself the name of 'Tiny Pollie,') was quite old enough to be useful. It was a pretty sight to see her sitting on the doorstep, at her grandmother's feet, daintily hemming, perhaps an apron for the latter or a pinafore for herself.

By the aid of her lace-making pillow Widow Linnet just managed to keep her grandchild and herself. This would have been impossible had it not been for Edna Glencairne; there was of course but little sale for lace in a small place like Wendale, but through her means the widow was enabled to dispose of a considerable quantity by sending it to a large shop in Rotherdale—the principal town in the Dale country—and thus she was able to get on very comfortably.

I think perhaps I ought now to say a few words about Clare, and how she came by that Cross which she bore so bravely.

There was a time, only a little less than a year before, when a terrible fever raged in the neighbourhood, and there was scarcely a house in Wendale and its vicinity but had one or more stricken down or dead beneath its roof. And so it was that the Angel of Death, hovering there for a season, overshadowed the Hall as well as the poorest cottage.

At the commencement of this sad time, Sir Philip Glencairne with his usual open-handed generosity spent much money in providing nurses, and in every way in his power aiding the sufferers; and gentle experienced Sisters took up their abode in Wendale, bringing comfort wherever they went.

And then the fever spread further and further, and at last attacked the Glencairnes. Father, mother, their eldest and only son, and their two daughters, were all seized with that illness which left their home motherless, and Clare, the youngest of them all, deprived of sight.

Poor little one! she was a long, long time, getting over the fever, and when at last it left her, she continued the weak suffering child we have seen. Very faint were the hopes held out for her recovery by the doctors, whom Sir Philip in his sorrow was constantly bringing to see his little girl.

It is said somewhere that the blind are ever more light of

heart than those who have the full use of the faculty of sight, and judging by Clare, and others I have seen and known, I think that saying is a true one.

It always seemed to strike one on going into Clare's room that the sun was shining, it was so cheerful there, and she was rarely if ever without a smile on her face.

Teaching Tiny Pollie became a great pleasure to her. Edna felt inexpressibly touched one Sunday afternoon on going into Clare's room to hear the following conversation between the two children. Edna was usually there during the lessons, so that she might be ready to lend a helping hand when sometimes Clare's blindness came in the way, and so when she perceived them to be too much engrossed to notice her having come in, she said not a word, but seating herself in the deep old-fashioned mullioned window-seat, listened with almost tears in her eyes.

The lessons were evidently over, and Pollie, sitting on the edge of the bed with her short legs a considerable distance from the ground, had her big brown eyes fixed on the face of the child-teacher beside her. This was one of Clare's bad days, and she had not attempted to get up.

It was Pollie who was speaking when Edna entered, and she caught the last part of her remark.

"And I'd take you first of all to the hospital, and when they'd made you see, oh, it wouldn't take a minute! you should go and look at all the great big ships down at the wharf."

- "It would be very nice, but it's no use thinking about it—I know I shall never see anything again."
- "Oh, Miss Clare! aren't you 'fraid? doesn't it look all black?"
 - "Are you afraid of the dark, Pollie?"
- "Oh yes, Miss Clare—it makes me cry if I wake up in the night, and I think about mother, and get ever so 'fraid."
- "Ah, I used to mind the dark too, but I don't now, and I don't think you will when I tell you why I don't. Are you quite comfortable, dear?"
 - "Yes, Miss Clare."
- "Well, it was a very short time after mamma died, and I hadn't been blind very long, when one night I woke up, and couldn't hear or see anything, and I was oh, so much frightened, that I shivered all over. I hadn't minded the darkness so much before if I could hear that Edna or some one was near me, but I called once or twice and got no answer, and I couldn't help crying very much, till all at once I heard Edna's soft step coming through that door between our rooms, and she said, 'Why, what's the matter, darling?' and then I heard her say, 'Mrs. Benning! Mrs. Benning! wake up directly! you may go to your own room now, I shall stop the rest of the night with Miss Clare,' and

the old nurse was so sleepy that Edna could hardly wake her. When she was gone Edna wrapped me in my dressing-gown, and carried me in her arms to the fireplace, and sat down in the rocking-chair and hushed me till I stopped crying and shivering, and she said they had persuaded her to go to bed that night instead of watching me as she had done ever since she got well, (for she was ill too—we all were you know,) and she was very much vexed that she had given in, and she wouldn't trust me to any one else again, and ever since she has slept here."

- "Miss Clare!"
- "Yes, Pollie!"
- "I want to know who Mrs. Benning is?"
- "Oh, she was an old nurse, who came in for a day or two while Marsden was away. Why?"
- "I thought p'raps she might be Letitia Mitten's aunt. She told me she'd got one who never will wake up when she's wanted—I don't know what her name is. Please go on, Miss Clare."
- "Where was I?—oh, I know. Well then I told her how frightened I had been, and she said, 'Oh, why didn't you think of our darling mother?' and I said it made me all the more frightened when I did, (just the same as you, Pollie,) and then she said, 'Clare, I'll tell you something which will take away all the fear.' I wish I could say it like she did,

I'm afraid I can't, but I'll try. There is a tradition, (tradition means story,) which says that every child, and every one else besides, has a guardian angel always by them to take care of them, sent by JESUS CHRIST," the child added reverently, bowing her head,-"just fancy, Pollie! guardian angels always near you and me, just where we are now, and wherever we go-isn't it beautiful? and they shield us with their wings from all harm, and watch over all we say or do. Then about mamma, she said, don't think of her as dead, and in the churchyard, because she herself isn't really there—I don't know exactly where she is, no one does, at least we know all the dead people go to Hades, (Paradise, you know,) but we can't tell whether they are sleeping till the last day, or awake and waiting. Edna says she herself thinks they watch over us, and join in all our prayers and praises, so now I always try to fancy I can hear mamma's voice, and whenever I am frightened at feeling alone in the darkness I think of the angels all round me, and mamma watching over me too. It's all the easier for me, because I can't see anybody, so it's just as easy to believe that they are there, as that you are-you'll think of all this, won't you, next time you're afraid?"

[&]quot;Yes, I will, Miss Clare-I will try."

[&]quot;And now, darling," Edna said, coming from her windowseat, "don't talk any more or you will be so tired, and my

little Pollie," she added, lifting the child down from the bed, "it is quite time you started to go home, for the sun is going down and Granny will wonder what has become of you."

- "Were you here all the time, Edna?" Clare asked.
- "No, dear, not all, but I wish I had been; you made me very happy, darling," was all Edna said.

CHAPTER V.

"I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says I must not stay!
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away!"

T. TICKELL.

I T was near the close of the Autumn that one Sunday afternoon Pollie came in from the Hall with very flushed cheeks, and a trembling lip.

- "Why, my deary, what ever be the matter?" asked her grandmother. "I do hope you ain't been a bad girl at your books?"
 - "No, Granny, but oh! they're going away, oh! for ever

so long! What ever shall I do?" And Pollie put her tiny pinafore up to her eyes in a touchingly woe-begone manner.

- "Who, my dearie? not the squire and the young ladies?"
- "Yes, Granny; and oh! they'll never come back again—I know they won't!"
- "Never come back no more! why, sure, they can't be leaving the Hall for good! Do'ee cheer up and tell me, my dear!"
- "No, Granny, but they'll be away all the winter, and it'll be next year before ever they come back again. Oh my dear Miss Clare!"
- "Well, I am sorry; I suppose they be going to try another air for that poor dear young lady. Well, and I don't blame them; it be mortal cold in these parts winter time."
- "But they're going directly, Gran, and its across the sea, all the way to the other end of France. I know they'll be drowned or killed before ever they come back!"
- "Hush, my deary, dont'ee take on so. Not but what I own Miss Clare be very delicate, the pretty dear, and I've often my doubts whether they'll rear her."

As may be supposed, the widow's mode of consolation was not of the kind best calculated to raise poor little Pollie's spirits, and she continued to cry on and off at intervals during the rest of the day.

What the old woman had gathered from 'Pollie's broken-

hearted words was quite correct; Sir Philip Glencairne had decided on taking his daughters abroad for the winter, in the hopes that Clare might derive benefit from the change of climate. The news had been told Pollie that afternoon, and the child was so much upset that her little mistress found it useless to attempt any lessons, and the usually happy hour had passed off in a very melancholy manner.

The following Tuesday week was the day fixed for their departure, and the time came only too soon for those who remained behind.

The day before Pollie went crying to the Hall to say good-bye to Clare.

- "Oh my darling," said the queer little thing, "I can't bear for you to go," and she clasped her tiny hands together, and her little sunburnt face puckered itself up into an absurdly agonized expression for one so young.
- "Never mind, Pollie, you must hope to see us again in the spring-time."
 - "Oh, but that's such a very, very long time off!"
- "It will soon pass; I want you to take care of Pip for me, will you?"

Pip was Clare's golden canary bird.

- "Take care of Pip! oh, Miss Clare, I will, I will! I'll be a mother to Pip!"
 - "Thank you, you funny little Pollie; I'm sure you will;

and here is a great box of bird-seed which will last you till then, but don't forget you must give him groundsel sometimes. And, dear," Clare added, and her voice grew very quiet and low, "if I should never come back again, you will always take care of Pip—he shall be yours for your very own then."

"Don't, Miss Clare, don't say that! I won't take care of Pip! I won't touch him! I don't want him! but oh! I do want you so bad!" and Pollie broke out into passionate tears.

"Oh, Pollie, I'm so much disappointed! When first papa said we had better not take Pip as well as my little Dick," (a little mite of a toy terrier,) "I thought, 'Pollie will take care of him for my sake,' and now you say you won't have anything to do with him! poor King Pippin!"

"Oh yes, Miss Clare darling, I will! I don't mean what I say. Only you will come back again in the spring—say you think you will, Miss Clare," little Pollie pleaded earnestly.

"And, Pollie," Clare went on, taking no notice of her question, "you must tell your grandmother I send her this woollen shawl; I made it myself, and she is to wear it always every day, and not to keep it only for Sundays; and say good-bye to them all for me."

This last day the house looked all confusion. It was not as if they were only going away for a short time; packing up

for a winter abroad, one of the party being an invalid, involves always a great deal of extra trouble.

Edna, who was as busy as any one, superintending the packing, and doing a great part of it herself, looked in to carry off Clare's little harmonina as she finished speaking.

- "Oh, Pollie child!" she cried, "don't go till I'm ready to go with you. I want to say good-bye to everybody, and I'll carry the bird-cage."
- "Oh, yes, Miss Edna, I'll wait as long as ever you like, and, please, you won't hurry, will you?"
 - "I shall not be ready for some time to come."
- "You won't forget all I've tried to teach you, Pollie?" said Clare.
 - "That I never will, Miss Clare dear."
- "And if supposing I never come back again (don't cry, dear, I must say it,) you won't be afraid to think of me, like you would have been a little while ago?"
 - "Oh no, no!"
- "And please, will you give me my King Pippin; I want to hold him for the last time—I know it is the last time, I feel it," and as she spoke, a thinking, far away look, came into the sick child's sightless blue eyes. "I don't know what it is, but I can't help feeling, oh! as sure as if some one had told me so. I've been very happy here, and we have had

nice times together, haven't we, dear? I know you're crying, Pollie, I can hear you."

- "I can't help it, I can't!"
- "Poor little Pollie!" Clare said, and her voice had quite a motherly ring in it. "The first thing, remember, supposing you hear that I'm dead, must be that very likely I shall have got my eyes back again then—oh! won't that be nice!"
 - "Oh! I will, and Miss Clare-"
 - "Well, Pollie?"
- "But I don't like to say it, Miss Clare—but if you're quite sure you won't mind?" said Pollie, looking at her doubtfully, with her head on one side.
 - "I'm quite sure I shan't mind."
- "Oh, well then," and Pollie's voice softened into a whisper, "if you see mother, will you tell her I've learnt to backstitch and herringbone? she'll like to hear, 'cos she taught me hemming," explained Pollie in an aside. "And please will you tell father I've got a picture of the 'Nardy Horseman,'" said the child, pronouncing it all wrong, "the ship he was drowned from, you know; the Vicar gave it me, and it hangs on one side of the fireplace, just over the toasting-fork. You'll tell them, Miss Clare?"
 - "If I can, Pollie."
 - "I'm afraid, dear, you must get your things on now, I shall

be ready directly," said Edna, as she passed on into her room.

"Please give me King Pippin's cage, I must put him back now. Good-bye, dear little Pip," and the little yellow bird, which had been sitting contentedly on her hand for the last quarter of an hour, ruffled his feathers, and submitted to be kissed with very good grace, before Clare, with a little sigh, put him back into his cage. "And now he's yours, Pollie," she said.

Tiny Pollie threw her arms round Clare's neck in an agony of grief. "Oh my darling! my darling!" was all she said.

"Good-bye, dear little Pollie; I don't like going away from you at all. Oh don't cry so!"

"Why, you poor little mite, you must cheer up!" said Edna, coming through the doorway with her hat and jacket on; "it will soon be spring." In this way they all deluded themselves into believing what in their inmost hearts they must have felt to be a vain hope.

As Pollie left Clare's room, she ran back for one more kiss, the last she would ever give or receive from her.

Tiny Pollie never saw Clare again.

CHAPTER VI.

"Autumn hath violets as well as spring,
And age its sweetness hath as well as youth."

MARY MAYNARD.

THE winter soon came, and so icily cold, that Widow Linnet often remarked to her little grandchild, "Ah, Pollie, it be a rale good thing Miss Clare, dear heart, didn't bide at home, to catch her death o' cold, as she'd a' done, nary a doubt on't," speaking in the peculiar dialect of Daleshire; and Pollie would raise a bright little face to her grandmother, and answer in her sunny way,

"Yes, Gran, it is a good thing; she's all in the warm, isn't she, Gran? and will come back again in the spring, as well as you or me, won't she, Gran?—or, at least, better than you," she would add in a pitying tone, "for I don't think you walk quite as straight as you used."

And the old woman, not a whit offended, would laugh cheerily, and say,

"No, my dear, I'm growing downwards, and my back, like me, isn't so young as it was."

But this was at the first part of the winter, when the accounts from abroad were really as promising as one could expect. Mr. Franklin the Vicar was constantly hearing from the Glencairnes, and once there had actually arrived a letter for Tiny Pollie enclosed in one of his, written by Edna, but dictated by Clare. Happy little one!—Mr. Franklin had generally some piece of information to impart respecting the little invalid, and his anxious parishioners began really to look forward to her returning home to them with fresh health and strength in the spring.

As for Pollie, she had kept a memorandum with a piece of chalk behind the kitchen door ever since the Glencairnes had left, dating from that day, and judging from the size of the marks, and the space they already covered, (the day on which the letter was received, being marked by a larger mark than six of the ordinary days put together,) they bid fair to cover the whole surface of the door, before it could be anything like springtime.

The Sisters who had come down from their home in the East of London, at the time when the fever was raging, still continued from time to time to visit Wendale, and under Mr. Franklin's directions, a small hospital was in course of erection, and an arrangement had been made that two of the Sisters from S. Agnes' Home should be in attendance.

The parishioners when first the Sisters had appeared among them, had been inclined to take offence, but before they had been with them very long, they saw for themselves the comfort and relief they brought with them to the sick and suffering, and the way in which they received the announcement that a hospital under their care was to be started, proved how great a blessing they had become to Wendale.

It was just about this time that the hospital was completed, and two Sisters duly installed. Their services were at once called into action, for three out of six beds in one of the wards were filled at once, and the patients, after the first week's trial, gave testimony to the comfort and unbounded care they met with.

This winter was an unusually severe one, the snow remaining on the ground several inches deep. The cold evidently tried Widow Linnet a good deal, and Pollie's remark regarding her grandmother not holding herself as erect as usual was certainly correct. Pollie's powers of observation were undoubtedly keen.

"You don't seem to work quite so quick, Gran?" she remarked one morning, not pertly, but merely because having made the discovery, she was such a plain spoken little child, that she always gave utterance to her thoughts, "and you didn't send near so much lace to Rotherdale last week; why didn't you, Granny?"

"My hands be getting rheumaticky, I don't seem to be able to do scarce anything for the cold," she replied; "and

if I don't get along a bit faster this week, I'm afraid it'll go hard for you and me, my deary."

Pollie was feeding King Pippin, while her grandmother was speaking. She appeared to be wholly engrossed in that most important operation, and made no further remark.

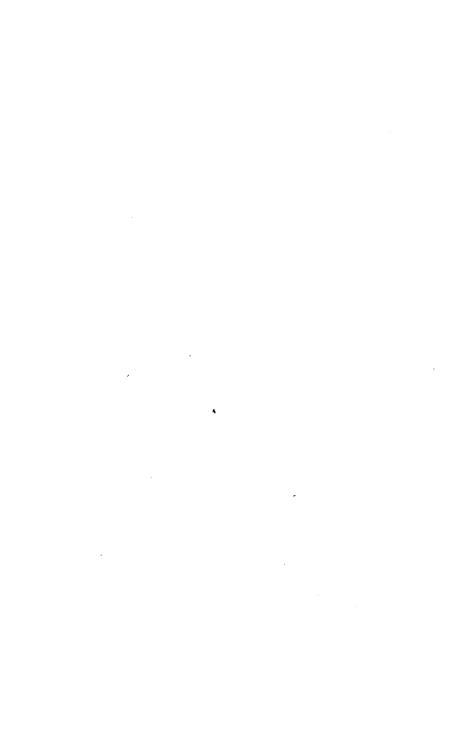
All the while however she was thinking deeply, and hardly stirred when the widow called her to breakfast.

They were early risers those two, it had scarcely struck half-past seven by the great stable clock at the Hall, when they seated themselves at the little round table on which was spread their frugal fare,—a loaf of bread, a little dripping in a yellow basin, and some weak tea, (to be drunk without either sugar or milk,) in a small black tea-pot,—that was all.

"There's no milk for your tea this morning, my dear," the old woman said, "we must be as sparing as we can in such like,—but it's hot, is the tea, and will warm you nicely before going to school."

And bright little Pollie drank her weak tea, and ate her bread and dripping as contentedly as possible, and as if she thought there were no nicer things in the land, and had finished it too, and climbed down from her chair in about one quarter of the time her richer little sisters of England would have taken to make up their minds as to the choice







of which delicacy they would prefer for their morning repast.

That subject, whatever it might be, that had so engrossed Pollie before breakfast, still seemed to weigh heavily on her mind, but at present she had no time to settle it, for it was part of her day's work to assist her grandmother in the tremendous undertaking of washing up the breakfast things. There were not many to be sure; in point of fact, merely one tea-pot, two cups, two saucers, and two plates, but their rarity only added to their value, and not to give her whole and undivided attention was not to be thought of for a moment, so Pollie shook back her brown hair out of her brown eyes, and stood by with a clean duster in her hand with which to dry this costly china, as one by one her grandmother handed them to her from out of the bowl of hot water.

And now I am sorely tempted to give another little description with still the same background to my picture, namely the widow's cottage, but I won't, though if any of my readers could have taken just one peep, and seen my Tiny Pollie, as she stood there with one of her grandmother's large white aprons, (a great deal too large for her of course,) fastened round her waist, the duster held tightly in her little fat hand, and her eager brown eyes fixed intently, and in evident anxiety on the precious tea-cup which the widow was

on the point of handing to her, I am positively certain they would have been as strongly tempted to linger awhile over this little scene as I am.

But when the "washing up" was concluded, Pollie found she had still a few minutes remaining before starting for school, and these were to be spent in the following manner. First of all she seated herself on her little three-legged stool before the fire, and then as she extended her tiny hands to feel the kindly glow, her face gradually assumed that intent look it sometimes wore. She was working out something of great importance in her clever little brown head.

By-and-by a light came into her eyes, as if some bright idea had suggested itself to her, and she commenced in a violent hurry to prepare for school.

"I suppose, Gran," she remarked, just before closing the cottage door after her, "you don't happen to have a father or mother, do you?"

"No, indeed, my deary, they be both dead and gone years ago," answered the old woman with a sigh.

"Oh, then you'll do," said Pollie, and she set off running at a brisk little pace across the snow.

CHAPTER VII.

"She is not dead,—the child of our affection,— But gone into that school Where she no longer needs our poor protection, And CHRIST Himself doth rule.

"In that great cloister's stillness and seclusion,
By guardian angels led,
Safe from temptation, safe from sin's pollution,
She lives, whom we call dead.

"We will be patient, and assuage the feeling We may not wholly stay;
By silence sanctifying, not concealing,
The grief that must have way."
LONGFELLOW.

UNDER a sky as blue as her sightless eyes, and a climate that the shivering inhabitants of Wendale would have envied, Clare Glencairne was living out the last few days of a very short little life.

For the first two or three months after the Glencairnes' arrival in that southern land which was to do so much for Clare, the little girl had rallied in a manner which en-

couraged her father and sister still more in that belief of theirs that health and strength, ay, and a long life, were yet in store for their darling; and even when the change came after which she gradually but surely continued to get weaker and weaker, they still blinded their eyes to the real state of the case, and assured each other that it always was the way with invalids, to feel the change of climate more after having been there some little time,—the very intensity of their anxiety showed itself in their repeated assurances to each other, it seemed necessary to repeat them to keep up the delusion.

Every day Sir Philip carried her out into the pleasant gardens beneath the olives, where she could sit in the sunshine and enjoy the delicate perfume of the flowers which came wafting by on every little breath of air.

They had been able to send such good accounts home up till then, that now that they had no fresh improvement to narrate, they deferred the home-letters from day to day in the vain hope that the next might bring the change they wished; but it was not to be, and it soon became evident to the many who took a lively interest in "la petite Anglaise malade," that she was slowly and surely fading away from among them.

They were sitting in Clare's room one afternoon, Clare had been out as usual most of the day, Sir Philip and Edna with her, they scarcely ever left her now. They had brought her in a little while before, earlier than usual to-day, but the rippling of the cascade made her sleepy, she said, and so they had brought her in; carrying her from the sofa arranged for her in the garden, to the one in her own room, where she now lay fast asleep.

They were very quiet, so quiet, fearing almost to whisper lest they should awaken her.

They had remained thus for perhaps half an hour when Clare suddenly opened her eyes, and sat up.

"If you please, I want Hugh," she said.

For a moment they thought she wandered, as she sometimes did on awaking suddenly, and knowing she was aware that her brother's regiment was quartered in Ireland.

"Why, Clare, darling, he isn't here, you know," Edna said, bending over her.

"I know-but, please, I want him to come."

Sir Philip strode across the room, in reply to Edna's startled look towards him, and gazed anxiously into Clare's face. "He shall come," he said gently.

Edna gave a quick look at her father.

"Is there anything else you wish?" he asked.

"No, father, nothing, thank you. But, oh, when can he be here?"

"In two or three days, my darling."

"That will be time enough," Clare said, and Edna laid her gently back on the pillows.

Sir Philip went out of the room; when he returned Clare was again sleeping.

- "Is she asleep?" he asked.
- "Yes, father."
- "You are sure?"
- "Quite sure."
- "I have telegraphed for Hugh."
- " Father!"
- "Oh, Edna, we must not disguise it anylonger—I have seen death in many forms, and I saw it to-day in my child's face."

Till then they had so completely shut their eyes to the truth, that now that it was openly declared every hope seemed dashed to the ground—there seemed to be no room for any hope at all; and they saw and acknowledged for themselves how vain that hope had been. Yet Clare herself was not really so very much worse than she had been for some time past, except that each day she grew weaker and weaker; the change had come before this.

"Why did they send us here, if it were not to cure her?" Edna demanded of the grey-haired old doctor, the day after. "To die so far away from home!" Edna said, with tears in her voice.

"My dear," replied the old man, "had you remained in England, she would have died long before."

But Edna felt this dying away from home even more than the child herself. "It can't make much difference to me where I die," she would say, vainly attempting to comfort Edna; "if I hadn't been blind, I dare say I should have wished to die at home; but I only care now to know that you and father and Hugh are near me."

On the morning of the third day after the telegram was sent this anxiously looked-for brother arrived. "Come at once," it had said, "Clare is dying." There was no time to stand upon ceremony, and Sir Philip was well aware that Captain Glencairne had always thought Clare nearer the end than they had, and so he came at once, travelling day and night. Clare was more than content. "Now I'm quite, quite happy," she said.

She seemed to sink more rapidly after Hugh's arrival. It is often so with the dying; they often struggle on till some great wish is accomplished, and then, the effort over, and their last wish gratified, their hold on life being so very slight, the end soon comes.

Even now, though it was so near, she was still carried every day for a little out into the gardens, the fresh air always reviving her more than anything else beside. Sometimes Edna would sit by her playing the softest music on Clare's little harmonina, which she was too far gone ever to play again herself; and lying back in her father's arms she would listen wrapped up in the sweet sounds.

So her last days were very happy ones, and her happiness was not marred by the faintest fear of death.

It was on the Sunday following that the last came—in the evening, at the close of a day almost like summer—Clare lying in Edna's arms, not sleeping, but in a kind of dreamy stillness, in which she had been all day, looked almost as if she were already not of this earth, with her waxen face and long fair hair, streaming over Edna's arm like a flood of golden light.

They had not left her at all that day, not even for Church, for it was so plain that the end was close at hand, that they could not bear to have her out of their sight a moment. Their little Clare, the youngest of them all!

Just as the bells belonging to the little English church commenced chiming for evensong, Clare opened her eyes widely, and the little thin white face lightened up all over.

"Oh see !" she cried, "Father! Edna! Hugh!—only see the brightness!"

So I suppose she had "got her eyes back again,"—who knows?

CHAPTER VIII.

"Oh ask not thou, How shall I bear
The burden of to-morrow?
Sufficient for to-day its care,
Its evil and its sorrow;
God imparteth by the way
Strength sufficient for the day."

The Dove on the Cross.

RGLAND again, back to the cold and snow. The gutters, and every square inch of water, covered with ice, and delightfully slippery, as the children coming out of school give good evidence; one, two, three, away they go, one after the other, down the sides of the streets, girls and boys alike. Pollie, however, is an exception to this rule; every rule has an exception, you know, and Pollie is the exception to this.

The first day or two Pollie went sliding about as eagerly as any one, but she discovered before very long that being so small was a decided disadvantage, insomuch that she got knocked over every minute or so, which made sliding a rather doubtful amusement.

But this morning Pollie had another reason for not wasting her time on the way; she was going to the Hospital,

entirely on her own responsibility, to see Sister Mary Agnes or Sister Alice, the two Sisters then in charge, on some very important business of her own. So Polly kept to the pave ment, and found that quite difficult enough walking for a young person of her capabilities.

Arriving at the Hospital door, by dint of standing on tip toe she just managed to reach as high as the keyhole; so a it was out of the question to attempt ringing the bell, and the (to her) gigantic thumps which she administered to the door panelling with her fists proving of no sort of use, she was on the point of raising her atom of a foot, in order to try, as a last resource, the perhaps undignified method o kicking, when the door was quietly opened from the inside not in the slightest degree because Pollie's efforts to make herself heard had been successful, but merely because the church clock had just struck twelve, and Sister Mary Agne was starting on her daily rounds of district visiting.

"Why, Pollie, little one!" she exclaimed, "how long have you been there, and why didn't you knock?" for Pollie ap peared to be in a panting condition after her fruitless exertions

"So I did, Sister, but it wasn't any good, and just when was going to kick, you came," Pollie said.

"Did you want to see me, or Sister Alice?"

"Yes, I did, Sister, I was wanting to see you very bad."

"Well, then, you can tell me all about it on the way; fo

I'm going part of the way to the almshouses, and we'll go together. But first tell me, how is Granny?"

- "Rather blue when I saw her last, Sister, with the cold, you know, and she's getting rheumaticky, she says. I suppose that's the cold, too."
 - "Have you been a good little girl at school to-day?"
- "Well, not very, Sister, I got rather cross over my spelling, but then, you know, s, c, i, s, s, o, r, s—scissors—is rather a hard word to spell."
 - "You'll try and be quite good this afternoon, won't you?"
 - "Yes, I'll try."
 - "And now what is it you wanted to see me for?"
 - "Sister-"
 - "Well יץ
- "Didn't you say you'd got a home up in London for orphans?"
 - "Yes, I dare say I did say so, for we have."
- "I s'pose, Sister, you don't happen to have room for two more orphans, do you—if times get very bad?"
 - "Plenty of room, childie; whom are you thinking of?"
- "Gran, you know, Sister; she's very old, and she says she doesn't know what ever she'll do if her hands get very bad, and me, Sister, I shouldn't take up very much room—oh! you might put me in anywhere, I shouldn't mind! and Gran's an orphan, and so am I!" Pollie added.

Poor little Pollie's disappointment on learning that her grand plan, which had taken so much time for consideration before being brought to light, would not quite answer, was very great. She had so set her heart upon it, poor mite, that I think her being "not very good" at lessons that morning arose in a great measure from thinking too much of this little arrangement of hers.

- "You remind me so much of a dear little girl we had at our Home last year," Sister Mary Agnes said to Pollie; "such a dear little girl, and she had such an odd name! she was called 'Neddie.'"
 - "Neddie! why that's a little boy's name!"
- "Do you know that is just what I said the first time I saw her, and she said, 'No, please'm, it ain't, it's mine.'"
 - "Oh what a funny little girl! is she there now?"
- "No, dear, she was run over one day when she was out walking, and—and—"
 - "And what, Sister? Oh please say!"
 - "She was so much hurt, Pollie, that she died."
 - "Oh poor little Neddie! Why am I like her, Sister?"
- "I can hardly tell, but you are, though she had light curly hair all over her head, and blue eyes, and you are just like your name, a little brown linnet. I think it must be your voice in a great measure, and you say things like she used to say."

"Oh, please tell me some more about her, Sister, please do!"

And Sister Mary Agnes, who had nursed little Neddie in her last illness, and had loved her very dearly, liked to talk of her and her devotion to her dying brother Dickey, and Pollie, with a child's insatiable love of stories, never tired of listening.

However, to proceed. Thanks to some warm rabbit's wool mittens, given by the Sisters, and the change from the intense cold to rather more genial weather, the Widow Linnet's rheumatism kept off, and she was enabled to continue her lace-making as usual.

Then came the sad tidings from abroad, and there was not one in Wendale who did not sorrow for the loss of little Clare, who, though she had spent but ten short years among them, had endeared herself by her sweet ways to all.

The news spread like wild-fire through the village, and Pollie was not long in hearing it.

At first she stoutly refused to believe it, but the knell, sounding through the frosty air, brought conviction with it, and with a great sob she flung herself full length (and such a tiny length it was!) on the cottage floor. Her grandmother, finding that all her attempts at consolation were

^{1 &}quot;Neddie's Care; or, Suffer the Little Children," published by Masters.

vain, resolved at last to let her lie still, by far the better plan. Children's tears are soon dry, and before very long it was discovered that Pollie had resorted to her usual method of self-comfort under any trial, namely, to putting her thumb in her mouth, and so falling fast asleep.

Poor little thing! for one so young she had gone through a good deal of trouble, and I think it had helped to make her the little old-fashioned body she was, and older, in many of her ways, than those happy children who have never known what sorrow is.

CHAPTER IX.

"And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But oh for the touch of a vanish'd hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!"
TENNYSON.

I T was a sad parting for Edna, when the time came for her to bid farewell to the little green mound with its pure white marble cross in the little English cemetery; for there can be no doubt about it, we cannot help having strong feelings deep down in our hearts for the graves of those we care about. And so it was with Edna, and her

tears fell fast at the thought of leaving her little only sister there.

It had all turned out so differently to what she had expected; it was so inexpressibly sad to have to go back alone, and she felt almost as if her heart must break as she knelt by the tiny grave, and for the last time tended the cross of flowers she had planted there. These flowers she had sent for from home, from Clare's own little garden, and the rose tree which stood at the foot was a cutting from the same tree, which for one summer had blossomed by the mother's grave so far away.

Then, rising, she hung a wreath of immortelles on the marble cross. "Good-bye, darling," she said, and walked away without once looking back, till she reached the churchyard gate.

Not far from there, with her dark hair arranged in two long plaits, came tripping along a little peasant girl, who in passing Edna wished her, with pretty French courtesy, "Good night."

A sudden thought crossed Edna's mind, and instead of merely returning the salutation, she paused to ask in the same language—

- "Will you tell me your name?"
- "Certainly, Mademoiselle; Alexine Lacarze is my name

 —I speak to Milady Glencairne, is it not so?"

- "Ah yes," Edna said; "look, Alexine, you perceive that little grave with the white marble cross?"
- "Oh, but yes, Mademoiselle, I have frequently observed Mademoiselle go there, I know it well."
- "I asked Monsieur le Curé to tell me of some one whom I could trust," Edna continued, "to go there sometimes after I have returned to England, to see that the flowers do not die for want of care, and he told me of you. Will you do this for me?"
- "Yes, certainly; Mademoiselle may rest assured that I will."
- "I have given M. le Curé a little money, which you will receive from time to time for your trouble. I could not endure to go leaving my little sister's grave uncared for."
- "I do not wish for money, Mademoiselle, for doing it; I recollect the little English invalid well, and will gladly do it for her sake, and yours."
- "Then accept it as a little present from me, and thank you, Alexine. Monsieur le Curé told me much of you, and your care for your sick mother, and a trifle coming in regularly will, I trust, be a help."
- "Thank you a thousand times, Mademoiselle, for your kindness. The grave of the little Mademoiselle shall be my constant care."

A few more words, and Edna passed on, comforted a

little with the thought that Clare's grave would not be quite friendless in that foreign land.

Hugh Glencairne had returned to his regiment soon after his little sister's death, and Edna and Sir Philip did not care to remain long after. The little winter retreat was daily becoming more and more distasteful to them, now that there was no longer any need for them to stay, and they longed to return to England.

The following day they started on their journey homewards, arriving that night at that most interesting of foreign sea-port towns, Bordeaux.

It was getting late when they arrived, and Edna's artistic taste was at once aroused by the picturesque, night-covered scene before her—the moon slowly rising over the sea, the tall-masted ships, waiting in port, weird and unearthly in the pale moonlight, while the deep shadows on the water, cast by the endless row of arches forming that interminably long bridge, all tended to make the scene a striking one, with its strong lights and shadows.

It was discovered, on counting over the luggage, that some mistake had arisen respecting it. It was therefore arranged that they should on that account wait for the forgotten box to be forwarded to them, before continuing their journey.

To while away the time, Sir Philip took Edna the follow-

ing morning over the harbour, pervaded, as is always the case, by the stir and excitement attending large seaport towns.

"Papa, do you see that man?" Edna said all at once, "there, crossing that plank! I'm sure I know his face. Who can he be?"

Sir Philip, who was very short-sighted, put up his glass and gazed at the man in question. "I really don't know, my dear, I can't see him well enough to pass an opinion, but probably it is a chance resemblance to some one you know which strikes so much."

"No, indeed, papa, I don't think so—I really believe I know him—I'm sure of it!" she added, as the man passed quite close to them. "Or it may be that I have seen him somewhere or other."

"Perhaps that is it," said her father, "though I hardly think it likely. One is often deceived by a passing likeness." And the subject dropped.

"I should like to sketch the harbour, papa," Edna said after a little, "but don't stop with me, I shall be quite safe if I keep opposite to our hotel, or if you like it better I'll go in doors, and sketch it from one of the windows."

"Well, I think that would be the better plan, dear, for I must go and see after that missing portmanteau, and I certainly could not leave you out here alone."

"All right, then, I'll go in," and Edna went in. She had not been sketching very long, when the sound of voices below attracted her attention, and thinking that her father might have come in, she opened the door and listened. She soon found out her mistake; it was the waiter who spoke "a leetle English," and another, but decidedly English voice having some conversation in the hall below. Edna was just on the point of shutting the door, when the following words met her ear.

"Well, if Sir Philip isn't in, can't I see Miss Glencairne? I know she's at home, 'cos I saw her go."

"Is anything the matter?" Edna asked, coming to the head of the stairs, "I thought I heard my name mentioned," she said in explanation.

The waiter, Ferdinand by name, came up the staircase to her. "Yes, Mademoiselle, there is a sailor, an English sailor, Mademoiselle, who wishes to see you." And Edna, who had gone back into the salon, saw to her surprise that the sailor who had attracted her notice while she was out had followed Ferdinand up stairs, and now stood bowing at the door.

"I beg your pardon, Miss," he said in a pleasant voice, looking all the while the picture of a hearty young English sailor; "if I could speak a word to you, Miss, I'd take it very kind."

"Certainly," Edna replied; "I think I ought to know you, but I cannot quite recollect where it is I have seen you," and she made a little movement with her hand to dismiss Ferdinand, who withdrew.

"I thought I knew your face, Miss, excusing the liberty; and Sir Philip, I knew him directly I see him, and I said to myself, says I, I'll just keep my eye on them two, and see where they lives, and then I'll go and make bold to ask how my old mother is."

"But you have not yet told me your name," Edna said, smiling, "and do you know, I am still in the dark!"

"Why, no more I have, Miss," he replied, but while he spoke a sudden look of startled recognition came into Edna's eyes, and she knew who it was before the answer came. "I am Jack Linnet, at your service," he said.

When, half an hour later, Sir Philip Glencairne came in from the Custom House, Edna met him outside the drawing-room door. There were tears in her eyes, and a pained expression on her face, as she laid her hand on her father's arm.

"Don't go in there, papa," she said; "I want to tell you something first," and she drew him into another room. "Oh, papa," she continued, "I was quite right this morning in thinking I had seen that sailor before, he is actually Jack Linnet!"

"Poor fellow! dear me, how sad! perhaps it would be as well for you to go back to him, but I think I had better keep away."

And Edna went at once—as she had often gone before to those in sorrow—as a ministering angel, on her mission of comfort.

[&]quot;But, my dear child, he was drowned at sea."

[&]quot;No, papa, he wasn't drowned after all. Why, he's here, in the drawing-room at this very minute! he was picked up when he fell overboard by a ship going to Melbourne, and he is only now on his way home to England. He must have recognised us after we saw him, and traced us out to ask after his mother. I saw at once he had not heard of his wife's death, and oh! I had to tell him. He is so terribly upset, father, I could not bear to see him. Had we better go back to him, do you think?"

CHAPTER X.

"I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with cheerful smiles,
And to wipe the tearful eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself
To soothe and sympathize."
MISS WARING.

THE days were lengthening fast, when at last the Glencairnes arrived at their home. It was a sad returning to them, instead of the happy one to which they had looked forward. They arrived early in the afternoon, and as the Hall was situated at some little distance from Wendale, the stranger seated on the box of the carriage beside the coachman escaped observation.

The exact day for their return was not generally known, so the two or three people who an hour later met Edna on her way to the almshouses, gazed in astonishment. So anxious was she that the news of her son's escape should be broken to the widow gently, that she had started almost immediately after arriving to tell her herself, arranging beforehand with Jack Linnet that he should be in waiting

somewhere near, in order that he might be with his mother as soon as she knew the glad tidings.

Edna's eyes glistened with the tears which were very near to the surface that day, as she traversed the familiar way and looked again on the scenes amongst which she had grown up, and which were so closely connected in her mind with those dear ones she had so lately lost. But she kept them back; the errand she was on was one which would make another glad, and she bravely determined in her own mind that no sorrow of hers should mar the mother's joy.

As she approached the almshouses she perceived the tiny form of Pollie sitting perched on the top rail of the little low gate at the end of Widow Linnet's garden path. She had balanced herself with bird-like ease, and made a very pretty little picture sitting there with her arms thrown back as she grasped the gate to prevent herself from falling. Her back was turned to the road, but Edna expected her every minute to look round to see to whom the approaching footsteps belonged. On nearer view she discovered that the child was too busily occupied in dividing her attention between keeping on her perch and singing in a melancholy little voice a decidedly mixed up version of her own of "Nellie Gray," which she had picked up somewhere—

"Oh! my poor Nellie Gray, they have taken you away, And I'll never see my darling any more, . . . I am sitting on the river in my little red canoe, While my banjo so sadly do I play."

The pathetic little song almost unnerved Edna, and she waited a moment to steady her voice before making herself known, whereupon Pollie on hearing the footsteps cease remarked plaintively, without turning her head.

"That does very well for my own Miss Clare, doesn't it, Lizzie? only her name isn't Nellie Gray, and I don't much know what 'sitting on the river in my little red canoe' means,—if he'd said a steamer I'd have known."

Fearing lest Pollie in her surprise at seeing herself instead of Elizabeth Pagburn, whom she evidently expected, should lose her equilibrium, Edna advanced, and putting her arm round the child, said—

- "It isn't Elizabeth, dear little Pollie."
- "Oh, Miss Edna! Miss Edna!" Pollie cried, throwing herself back into Edna's arms, "Oh, my dear! my dear!" and the little thing began crying piteously.
- "Poor little one!" Edna said gently, soothing her, and holding her fast. "But you're not to cry, Pollie, for I'm come to tell you some good news."
- "There isn't any," Pollie said, between her sobs. "I don't know what it is—it's always bad," a sentence which sounded all the more touching from the lips of a little child.

After a little pause Edna dried Pollie's eyes with her

handkerchief, and was made to undergo a like operation from the child herself, who pulled out the merest scrap of a pocket-handkerchief from her own little pocket for the purpose, remarking as she did so, with that sudden transition from tears to smiles, which children alone are able to achieve, —"Isn't it a nice little one? I made it myself, and hemmed it every bit with pink cotton to make it look pretty, only it's all washed out. I'm going to do the next one with blue, —I shan't want more than two, Granny says."

- "Is your grandmother in doors, Pollie?"
- "Yes, she is, Miss Edna; I think she must be asleep though,—'cos sitting on the top of the gate I can just see a bit of her cap through the window, and I'm nearly sure I saw it nod several times."
- "Well, then, I won't disturb her just yet. Come with me, dear, a little way along the Wendale road," and, holding Edna's hand tightly in hers, Pollie trotted gravely by her side.

To Edna came the thought of the last time she had walked with Pollie over the same ground they were now traversing, on that last day before leaving her home, not five months before. If Pollie thought of it too she did not in any way allude to it, but I think in all probability she did not; it was the first time to Edna, but Pollie had crossed it every day since.

- "Tell me, Pollie," Edna said, after they had been talking some time of Clare, "were you very fond of your father?"
- "Yes, I was, Miss Edna,—mother and I used to think there wasn't nobody like him. He wasn't always at home, you know, but when he was, oh! it was twice as nice. Mother taught me to sing, 'Father, dear father, come home to me soon,' but it wasn't any good, he never came back to hear it."
- "Supposing some one were to tell you it had all been a mistake about him having been drowned?"
- "Oh, it wouldn't be a bit of good,—I shouldn't believe them."
- "But do you know, dear, it is quite possible; I myself know that it did happen so to some one I know."
- "Oh, Miss Edna, why do you say all that? it does make me want my dear Daddy so bad."
- "Because ——. Look, Pollie, see if you can tell me who that is?"

At that moment the figure of Jack Linnet appeared at a turn of the road, quickening his pace at the sight of the two before him.

Edna felt Pollie's hold on her hand gradually tighten, then relax altogether.

"Oh!" she cried, clasping both her hands together, after that pretty little fashion of hers, and her eyes becoming perfectly round with astonishment, "Oh! why, it's——it's——it's——my own DADDY!!!" and she set off running as fast as her feet could carry her over the ground to where her father now stood with outstretched arms, awaiting his little daughter.

Edna waited just one moment to see him stoop down and lift her up into his arms, then she turned away and walked back to the widow's cottage. There was no time for any more thought, the news must be told, and as quickly as she was able, for she knew how anxious Jack was to embrace his mother.

"Oh, Miss Edna! be it really you, my deary, or be I dreaming?" the old woman exclaimed, starting up from her chair, where truly enough as Pollie had surmised she had been slumbering by the fireside.

"Yes, it is really I," Edna answered; "we only came home this afternoon."

"Ah! my dear, it ain't much of a coming home for you without that dear lamb! that it ain't."

"I think we mustn't talk of her to-day, Mrs. Linnet, I can't bear it very well yet—and I want to tell you some news which will I know make you very happy," and then in her sweet voice and gentlest manner she told the wondrous tidings of how her son was yet alive to be the blessing of her declining years.

It was some little time before the poor old woman could be made to understand and believe it to be true.

"It can't be! Oh, my dear, it can't be!" she kept on repeating over and over again.

"But indeed it is," Edna said, "and he shall tell you so himself." Then she opened the cottage door, and signed to the sailor, (who with Tiny Pollie seated on his shoulder, with both arms round his neck, waited outside at a little distance,) to come in.

I cannot attempt to describe the meeting, it must be sufficient for me to say it was one of joy, greater than that which often falls to the lot of any of us—a joy similar to that which the Sisters of Bethany must have experienced when their dead was raised to them, and yet a joy not wholly unmixed with sorrow, because of that gentle little missing wife, whom the grave could not restore.

Then her trying work completed, Edna slipped away from among them, with the words the widow had uttered in her joy sounding in her ears—

"This my son was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found."

CHAPTER XI.

"FATHER, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
And the changes which are sure to come,
I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee."

MISS WARING.

THE next two or three months passed by uneventfully enough. At the Hall little occurred to break the stillness which had fallen upon it. Sir Philip and Edna Glencairne had gone through too much to care to mix more than was absolutely necessary with the outer world. In constant occupation and unwearied labour among the poor of the parish, Edna sought to fill up the void which death had made in her life; the Sisters often told her she worked as hard as they, and I think they were very nearly right.

Her district employed a good deal of her time, and diverted her thoughts, while at the same time she was always ready to be with her father whenever he required her, which was often, to walk, ride, or drive with him, as the case might be, managing her work so well that it in no way interfered with any arrangement of his.

In the meantime Widow Linnet was spending a very happy time with the son so miraculously restored to her.

The Hardy Norseman Jack had discovered was daily expected to arrive at Seaweed Harbour from her last voyage, and he had but little doubt that the captain would take him on again. He was getting rather anxious for her return, for being a true sailor he was becoming restless on shore, and thirsting to return to his seaman's life.

The excitement and surprise occasioned by his reappearance in Seaweed Harbour were only second to that already experienced by the whole parish of Wendale, and great sympathy was expressed for the unexpected loss he had met with in Mildred, his young wife.

Once he took little Pollie with him to revisit her old home and her mother's grave. During her short absence her Grandmother, to use her own words, "felt quite lost" without her little companion. "I've got used to her, and she to me, and though I'm sure and I don't know wherever she come by them queer ways of hers, yet I will say as she's as sweet-tempered a little lass as one could wish to see!" which remark she addressed to Sister Alice who had called to visit the old woman.

"Yes, she is that, I'm sure," Sister Alice replied. "Do you know, Mrs. Linnet, Sister Mary Agnes and I are often very much puzzled when we look at Pollie, and when we

hear her talking sometimes, to account for her great resemblance to a little child we had in our Home last year."

"Well, now that be strange! here was me a-thinking there weren't no such another child, look where you would, as my Pollie, and now it do seem as how there be! Well, I never did!"

"Not now there isn't;" and a shadow crossed Sister Alice's brow. "Our dear little child is not alive now, but it is a sad as well as a very happy story, and I will tell it you another time. But we have never been able to trace out to whom this little one and her brother belonged, and now that we have begun the subject, I want to ask you if you ever had any other child besides your son Jack?"

"No, ma'm, he were the only one as ever I had, and dear! the fuss as his poor father made of him I never did! not but what there ain't no great wonder at it neither, for of all the fine, hearty, healthful boys as ever I see, he beat them all, that he did!"

"And he is a fine fellow now," Sister Alice said, smiling. And the old woman who had seemed a little dull when the Sister entered brightened up, and gave her a long detailed account of nearly everything this wonderful Jack had ever said or done, from the cradle up to the present time, finishing up with the following words,—"But Polly don't take after her father like she did poor Milly, not but what she

has his bonny smile, there's no denying it; but I've heard my Jack say as she favours her mother's family wonderful.

"Who are Pollie's relations on her mother's side? I don't remember ever hearing you mention them before," said Sister Alice, who had been vainly for some time past trying to bring the widow back to the point.

"Well, my dear, (you must reely now excuse the liberty I takes, but I gets so used to calling Miss Glencairne, my dear-O I likes it,' she says, when I humbly begs her pardon—that I forgets who I'm a-talking to,) well, my dear, as I were going to say,—Milly's father were a farmer in a small way, used to live down at Seaweed Harbour, where Jack first see our Milly you know. Well, they've what you may call emigrated to Americky, where they're getting on wonderful, so Jack says, for they never could abear Seaweed Harbour after their eldest daughter, (Anna she were called.) married against their will, and so they took to emigrating. Milly, she told me all about it that time as she and Jack come here with Pollie, but little more than a baby, and the longest hair for a child of her age as ever I see-which were two year and five month, or it may have been close upon six. I can't say for sure, but it were either one or the other -and as brown as you might almost say a nut; and said as pretty and as plain, 'Tata Danny,' as soon as ever she were brought into the house, and afore ever I'd had time to kiss

her, much less Jack nor Milly." The old woman paused at this juncture to take breath, she had rather a habit of running from one subject to another, and it was fatiguing work.

"Yes?" said the Sister inquiringly,—"you mentioned a sister of your daughter-in-law—will you tell me about her? believe me, it is not from idle curiosity that I ask."

The old woman did not require much prompting—she was only too glad to have found so ready a listener to her anecdotes, and complied at once.

"Well, now about that there sister of Milly's. I never rightly understood her story till Milly one day was telling me about it, and she says, says she, 'Oh, if poor dear Anna had but stopped in that sitivation, where she were that comfortable, and everything she could want at her elbow, as one might say, she'd a' been alive and well now! not but what she may be that,' Milly said, with the tears a-standing in her eyes, 'but we've never heard tell of her for seven years or more, and oh, I do think as how she'd a' written if things had gone on well.'"

- "Where did she go when she left her situation?"
- "I don't rightly know, miss, but from what I could make out, she married without ever so much as asking leave, and run away, so Milly said, a young fellow belonging to one of them German bands as go worriting about, (so I've heard

say, but don't trouble us much, and no more German than I am, not in the general way, though I'm not saying as this one weren't,) but Milly said as how her father and mother were dreffel cut up when they gets a letter for to say she were married and hadn't waited to ask them nothing about it 'cause she didn't want to marry against their consent like, and she know'd as they wouldn't give it if she had, but she were very happy and they wasn't to fret, for her husband made a beautiful trade with his music. It weren't at all the sort of thing them Lanes would like, and they didn't—they held up their heads a bit, and had put great store by Anna turning out well, as she seemed likely to do, and it were a great blow to them, Milly said."

"Did they ever hear from her again?"

"Twice they did, and then never no more. Once when she wrote word as she had got a little boy, but he were very weakly, though a great comfort to her, though times were bad through her husband being laid up with a bad cough, which prevented him getting out some days; and then again two or three years later, when she wrote word to say she'd got another—a little girl this time, (you look warm, my dear, let me set the door open,) and nary a word more, and that was the last as ever they heard. You see her father were that cut up when he got the first letter of all, that he wrote back a very sharp one, to say as how she'd

chosen her own path and was to keep to it, and not expect nothing from them. Ah, he were terrible put out about it, poor dear Milly said."

At that moment as the widow finished speaking, the sound of little pattering feet came nearer and nearer along the road and up the garden path, and the little voice that had been so much missed during its two days' absence was plainly to be heard; altogether there was quite a little commotion outside of pleasant sounds; then the cottage door was pushed widely open, and Pollie scampered in, uttering a succession of little joyful shouts at the sight of her old Granny.

In a moment she had scrambled up into the old woman's lap, and put both arms round her neck. This was rather a difficult operation, as one hand was tightly clasping a queerly shaped paper parcel.

"Oh, it's the beautifullest thing you ever saw in your life!" she exclaimed, gasping for breath, as she made futile attempts to pull off the string with which the paper covering of this "beautifullest thing" was fastened, but this however appeared likely to be more than a match for her sturdy little pulls and tugs.

"Why my darling!" the old woman cried, "I never thought of seeing you so soon! why where's the father?"

"Oh, he's coming," Pollie said, nodding her head, "I ran

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on first, 'cos I thought p'raps you'd be wanting to see what I'd got for you. Don't you remember, Gran, I promised to buy you something?"

"Why, bless the child, so she did! but my deary, you've never said nary a word to Sister Alice," the widow answered.

And truly enough Pollie in her excitement had never noticed that there was any one else in the room. Now, however, she hastened to make full reparation for her former neglect, and this accomplished, and a quick look having been cast round the room to make sure that there was no one else to be greeted except the cat, she recommenced her unpacking, remarking as she did so—

"Pussy can wait, can't you, Sophy?" (for since her discovery of the fancied resemblance on the first day of her arrival, Pollie had always insisted on calling the cat 'Sophy,') "and I said how d' you do to Pip in the garden," she added. King Pippin's cage was always hung out in the sun for an hour or so every day, well out of the reach of cats or any other danger.

When at last the coverings were removed, and a great red velvet pincushion covered with shells appeared in sight, Pollie's cheeks became nearly as bright, and she commenced jumping up and down with delight.

"Oh, isn't it the most beautifullest thing you ever saw?" she said earnestly, "and it opens too!" At this climax she

danced a little dance of her own invention all round the room.

The old woman's admiration was perfectly genuine, and the praise which she accorded satisfied Pollie's highest anticipation. They were still admiring it when Jack Linnet arrived, and Sister Alice bidding them good evening proceeded on her way home.

"I am very much mistaken," she said to herself, as she walked quietly home across the fields, which Spring was touching up with her fresh green tints, "I am very much mistaken if I have not discovered some clue to the history of our dear little Neddie and Dickey. It isn't likely there should be that indescribable look about Pollie which reminds us so much of Neddie, without some reason for it." And so she said to Sister Mary Agnes after she had returned home, and the Sisters agreed in thinking that they were on the right track to discover to whom those little ones had belonged.

CHAPTER XII.

"And following her beloved LORD,
In decent poverty,
She makes her life one sweet record
And deed of charity."

LONGFELLOW.

" Eve of S. Mark.

"I am writing to remind you of your promise to spare me, if possible, a few hours on the next Festival, and as to-morrow is one, I want you to drive with me over to Edgedale. Will you? I am letting you know in good time, so I hope you will be able to come. There is Evensong at five o'clock, you know, and I believe the Easter decorations will not have been taken down, because of the Dedication Festival. Do not trouble to answer this; we shall meet, I hope, after the Celebration to-morrow morning, and you can tell me then if you agree to my plan for the afternoon. With love to Sister Alice and yourself (and please tell Sister Alice that she has promised to come next time,)

"I am,

"Yours very affectionately,

"EDNA GERTRUDE GLENCAIRNE."

This was the note which Sister Mary Agnes received on the Eve of S. Mark.

- "You can come with me, can't you?" Edna said the following morning, as the Sisters and she walked home after the early Celebration.
- "Yes, I shall be very glad," Sister Mary Agnes answered.
 "We have no very urgent cases on hand just at present, so Sister Alice can spare me for two or three hours this afternoon."
- "That will be charming. I only wish you could both come."
- "Thank you, but that couldn't be, you know," Sister Alice replied, smiling. "Isn't it a lovely morning? and oh! how delicious those banks look covered all over with primroses, with the dew still on! I wish we had time to stop and gather a great bunch of them for our sick people!"
- "Sister Mary Agnes and I will bring you home a bonny one this afternoon," Edna said, "only there won't be any dew on them, I'm afraid, but perhaps that will be rather a good thing considering the invalids. Only fancy! a year or two ago I should hardly have begun to get up at this time, eight o'clock though it is."
- "I think the early morning is the nicest time of the day to be out. By-the-bye, what time am I to be ready for

you?" asked Sister Mary Agnes; "I can't very well leave before three."

- "Very well, then, let us say three; I will call for you at that time, or later if you prefer it."
 - "No, thank you, that will do very nicely."
- "I must go home now to give my father his breakfast, he is going to London for the day;" and so saying Edna parted from the Sisters, their roads lying in different directions at this juncture.

Five or ten minutes later, and Edna was seated behind the urn at the Hall breakfast table, reading out to her father such portions of her letters as were likely to interest him.

Edna had a rule to which she strictly adhered, and this was to make a point of not discussing parish matters, or details relating to her district at meal times. Every morning Sir Philip was ready at a stated hour to attend to whatever object Edna particularly wished to direct his attention, and she took care that it should be then, and then only, that she brought such subjects under his notice. It was a good plan, and one which prevented Sir Philip from feeling, as many parents do feel, when the district is ever the one theme of conversation, that his daughter's interests were wrapped up more wholly in her parish work than in her father and her home.

At three o'clock, as agreed, Edna in her own little pony-

carriage, drawn by the prettiest, merriest, most impudent little pair of brown ponies, stopped at the Hospital door for Sister Mary Agnes.

True to her time, as Edna to hers, the Sister opened the door to come out almost at the same moment that the "brownies" gave a reluctant permission to stay their prancing little feet.

"What patterns of punctuality we are!" laughed Edna; "hark! the church clock is striking at this very moment. To tell the truth, I thought I was late, but I suppose our stable clock is a little fast, it struck as I was driving through the Park." They were off by this time, the impatient little ponies having allowed Sister Mary Agnes just one minute to get into the carriage, were getting over the ground at a fine pace, tossing their pretty heads, and presenting a confused appearance of manes and tails to the intense admiration of the passers by and themselves.

"If you don't mind, we will drive straight to the Vicarage," Edna said, after they had been conversing some time on other matters. "You know the Rodneys very well, don't you?"

"Yes, I know them through their visiting that poor girl we have from their village, and I like them, and their sister, Mrs. Vere, very much. Are they not in some way related to you?"

- "No, not related, but we have known each other all our lives; Gertrude Rodney's mother and my mother were at school together, and they had always agreed that their eldest daughter should be the other's godchild, and named after their godmother—that is why I am called Edna."
- "Ah! I have sometimes wondered how you came by such an uncommon name, knowing too that it had not been your mother's."
- "My second name is Gertrude," Edna said; "but Edna is a strange name, and one gets called such queer nicknames in consequence! my brother Hugh, till quite lately, always called me either Eddie or Neddie, and even Ned alone, but since I 'came out,' he has never called me anything but Edna. I don't think mamma liked it after I was grown up, she thought it sounded fast."

Surprised at receiving no answer, Edna turned to her companion, and was startled to see her strangely moved by her words.

"Sister Mary Agnes!" she exclaimed, "oh! what is it? what have I said?—no, never mind, don't try to say," she added, hastily, seeing that the Sister was making an effort to speak; and the girl pretended to become absorbed in the difficulties of driving such self-willed little ponies, giving Fairy a wee lash with her parasol whip as she spoke, which

the little thing appeared to resent, but in reality rather liked than otherwise.

"I can tell you about it now," Sister Mary Agnes said after a little pause. "I was startled, that was all. It seems that quite by chance your words have supplied another link to a discovery Sister Alice and I have been trying to make."

"How can that possibly be?"

"I will tell you," Sister Mary Agnes went on; and then she rapidly sketched the sad story of the two little children, who had been so dear to her for one short year before they died, finishing up with the words, "And now, if we could only be sure that it was their mother who was the sister of Pollie's mother, that would of course account for the resemblance; and if we could find out that Anna Lane had before her marriage lived with your godmother, whose name you say was Edna, it might very naturally follow that she called her little girl after her mistress, and thus would arise her hitherto unaccountable name of 'Neddie.'"

"How strange if it all turns out as you say!" Edna said; "I wish I could remember if there was ever a maid called Anna Lane living with my godmother; and oh how sad about those dear little children!"

"Shall I tell you why the child Neddie was so dear to me? ah! it was because that if my own little one had lived she would have been just her age," Sister Mary Agnes said, with her eyes bright with unshed tears, "I am a widow, you know;" and the rest of the drive was passed in almost silence.

It was such a pretty drive, between high banks, one mass of wild flowers, across the heather-scented common, and on nearing Edgedale through a wood, where feathery ferns, primroses, wood-anemones and blue bells, grew embedded in the softest green moss, which spread like a velvet carpet as far as the eye could reach.

The wood ended very suddenly, so suddenly that it was not till all at once you came upon the glorious view lying below at your feet of sloping pasturage, cottage homes half hidden among the sheltering beech trees, and a winding, sparkling river, that you became aware that you had gradually, and without knowing anything at all about it, been ascending a considerable hill, which enabled you on emerging from the wood, to take a sweeping view of the valley beneath.

This was the scene which suddenly presented itself for the first time to the Sister's gaze.

"How lovely!" she exclaimed, drawing a deep breath, and breaking the silence. "How is it possible that some people can say and think that our English scenery isn't to be compared to the scenery abroad! I never saw a prettier view anywhere."

• 1

"Have you been much abroad?" Edna asked. The ponies were going very cautiously down the hill, but looking about them all the while, as if they too enjoyed the view, which I have not the smallest doubt in the world they did.

"Yes, a great deal. Until my marriage when I was seventeen, I almost lived entirely abroad—after that I never left England again. It was from an accident he, my husband, met with, not two years after, that he died; and then our little childie went, and I was glad for him to have her. God is keeping them both so safely, and I am very happy."

Edna slipped her disengaged hand into the Sister's in silent sympathy; then, after a little pause, she said, softly,—

"We may not see her sacred crown of honour, But all the angels flitting to and fro, Pause smiling as they pass, they look upon her As mother of an angel whom they know.

"Ah, saints in heaven may pray with earnest will And pity for their weak and erring brothers; Yet there is prayer more mighty still— The little children pleading for their mothers."

And then again they relapsed into silence.

The long winding road was getting more level now, and

¹ A. A. Procter.

after a little while the brownies decided between themselves that they might safely proceed a little faster now that the steepest part of the hill was passed, they accordingly gathered themselves up, and set off at a brisk trot, which soon carried them down; at the accomplishment of which feat they expressed their approval by sundry little playful tricks, partly executed for the gratification of the inhabitants of the pretty Edgedale cottages they were now passing.

The beautiful little Gothic church next appeared in sight, from amidst a cluster of trees, and Edna drove slowly by, in order that Sister Mary Agnes might have a passing glimpse. The ponies after this considered it high time to take the law into their own hands again, and knowing the correct thing to do under the circumstances, resumed their quick pace, turned in at the Vicarage gate, scampered up the carriage drive without slackening it at all, and drew up in style at the Vicarage door, where they stood to all appearance the demurest, quietest little deceivers imaginable.

It was nearly time for church then; they had not hurried over their drive, notwithstanding the ponies, and so it was nearly five o'clock when they reached Edgedale Vicarage, and the bell commenced ringing for Evensong, before they had been there many minutes.

"Do not say anything about Anna Lane just yet," Sister Mary Agnes had said, as she and Edna entered the house, and so she had kept silence about her, waiting till the Sister should be ready for her to speak.

"Of course you will come back to the Vicarage after Evensong," Mrs. Rodney said, as they all walked together that short distance to the church. "Oh you must! I ordered tea to be ready then, when I found you would not be in time for it before church; and besides, I want to show you Baby!" And then they all went into S. Mark's.

Edna's supposition regarding the decorations was correct, for though in an ordinary case they would have been removed by S. Mark's Day, yet in consequence of the church being dedicated to that saint they had been left. It was too early days for Edgedale to keep a Dedication Festival, and so Mr. Rodney at present had thought it best to wait a little before introducing this, to the Edgedale inhabitants, hitherto unheard-of custom. But no one could object to the decorations being left a day or two longer than usual, nor did they, and the Vicar hoped that by the time the Festival of the Dedication came round again, the people would be not only willing, but glad to commemorate the occasion.

After the service was over, Sister Mary Agnes, Mrs. Rodney, Mrs. Vere (the latter's young widowed sister), and Edna, waited for Mr. Rodney to join them in the church, where they examined more closely the decorations.

- "I wish our church could be made to look like this," Edna whispered to the Sister.
- "Never mind, dear," she whispered back, "S. Mary's is a difficult church to decorate, but the work is the same, you know."

It was after they had returned to the Vicarage, that Edna at a sign from Sister Mary Agnes, said—

- "Gertrude, can you recollect your mother ever having a maid called Anna living with her?"
- "No, I don't remember one of that name. Do you mean as lady's maid?"
- "Well, yes, I suppose she would have been lady's maid; but was there any maid at all called Anna Lane?".
- "Lane! oh yes, I recollect Lane perfectly," Mrs. Vere exclaimed; "I know now whom you mean. You won't remember her, Gertrude, she came just after you went abroad those two years with the Glencairnes, you know, Edna; and she had left for no rhyme or reason that we knew of at the time, a little before you came home."
- "Ah yes, I do remember hearing something about it—she was the girl who suited mamma so exactly, wasn't she? Oh! and we found out afterwards that she had married and ran away without anybody knowing anything at all about it. I remember all about her now."
 - "Why do you want to know, Edna?"

Then they, too, were told the sad story.

- "I fear there cannot be much doubt about it," Mr. Rodney said, "but what a shocking fate for the poor girl—God help her! It would be almost better for the parents not to hear of her terrible death."
- "It would indeed; but oh! what could have induced her to drown herself!" Mrs. Rodney exclaimed.
- "Probably starvation, and seeing her boy wasting away without the power to aid him, unhinged her mind, after losing her husband, too, from evidently the same complaint. It is the only consolatory way in which to look upon it, poor girl!"
- "Perhaps, too, she wrote home several times, and not knowing of Farmer Lane having emigrated, thought they had cast her off entirely," Edna said. "Oh, it is too sad!"

The opportune arrival of Master Baby just then changed the current of their sad thoughts. Edna gave a quick glance at Sister Mary Agnes, when he was brought in, remembering the one little page of her history that she had shown her during their drive; and the Sister, interpreting her look aright, smiled back in answer to the kind thought, for there was nothing in the fine boy before them to recall painfully to her mind the little girl-baby of five months she had lost awhile.

The interval which followed, before starting for home, was

spent in gathering Sister Alice's flowers. This did not take long in doing, fortunately for them, or the shades of night would have gathered round them ere they could reach Wendale.

The drive home, however, was accomplished in about one half the time the drive to Edgedale had taken; the ponies were in a hurry to get home, knowing they were a little late for supper, and so in rather more than an hour they were once more clattering over the stone pavement of their stable yard.

CHAPTER XIII.

"One by one, bright gifts from heaven,
Joys are sent thee here below;
Take them readily when given,
Ready, too, to let them go.

"One by one thy griefs shall meet thee— Do not fear an armed band; One will fade as others reach thee, Shadows passing through the land."

A. A. PROCTER.

THE sands of my little story are nearly all run out—this is the last chapter.

The first step the Sisters took after their discovery was to write and acquaint the Mother Superior with all the particulars.

A few days later they received a letter from Sister Catharine, one of the Sisters in the London Home, in which she said,--"We were very much interested in the discovery you have made in reference to little Neddie and Dickey, and Mother gave me directions the same afternoon on which she received your letter to try and trace out as much as I could about the poor father and mother. I did my best, and though I could not discover any positive proof, Mother thinks (and so do I) that there can be no doubt but that you are right; and perhaps the tiny link that I am going to add to your chain of evidence may help a little. recollect that notwithstanding Susan Brown's rough, hard manner, we found that in her way she had not been altogether cruel to those poor children—at least when she was sober, I mean—and had even helped their mother to nurse her dving husband. It was on one of these occasions she says she heard, by chance, their name, but would not have taken any notice of it had it not been for the poor woman's evident dismay. Well, I called to see her first of all (it is really quite a pleasure now to go into her neat little house, and she is getting on so well with her mangle,) and again asked her to try and recollect the name. As usual, she said she should know it at once if she were to hear it, but she could not say it herself, because 'it had a queerish sound, for all it seemed so easy.' I was so determined not to leave a stone unturned, that I set to work, trying her with all the names I could think of; after a great many fruitless efforts on my part she suddenly said, 'It were sommat like Fred, but it warn't Fred, and the other name were uncommonly like Charles.' This set me thinking again; by degrees a brilliant idea seized me, and calling to mind that you said the man whom Anna Lane had married was supposed to be a German, I said, 'Was it Carl?' 'Ah!' she exclaimed at once, 'that's him!' And so nothing now remains to be proved but whether or no Carl was the name. What the Christian name (the name like Fred, you know,) was, I could not discover, and that is all the help I can give you. there no way in which you might find out a little more about 'Carl?' I feel convinced in my own mind that he is the German whom Anna Lane married; still, one would feel better satisfied to have it known for certain. It is a sad. sad story; and yet I cannot say sad, when I think of our two little ones at rest in the haven where they would be."

A few days later, and it was proved beyond doubt. The Sisters, having told Jack Linnet all they knew and surmised, requested him to search among the things belonging to his wife that had been sent in the seaman's chest with Pollie from Seaweed Harbour at her mother's death. This he did, and succeeded in finding one of those letters of which Mildred had once spoken to the Widow Linnet; it had been carefully put away, with several other letters received at different times from her parents and her husband, in an old work-box, and had evidently been untouched since she herself had placed it there. In this letter were several allusions to "Fritz," and it was signed "Anna Carl."

Then the next thing to be done was for Jack Linnet to write to his father and mother-in-law, whom he had never as yet seen, and break to them the sad news of their two daughters' deaths; for it was, as he said, very probable that they had not even heard of his wife's death.

Such indeed proved eventually to have been the case; for some time past Farmer Lane and his wife had been growing more and more anxious at receiving no tidings.

It may appear strange that when, in consequence of the grief occasioned by the conduct of one daughter, they left their native land, they should of their own accord have put the sea between themselves and their only other child, at a time when it was only natural to suppose they would have turned to that remaining one for consolation, and the reason was this.

When the plan of emigration was first thought of, Farmer Lane and his wife had no idea of leaving Mildred behind them, nor would they have consented to do so had it not been that Mrs. Lane's aged father died but a short time before they started, and so the girl was left to be a comfort to her grandmother.

With her she had lived until the old woman's death, which had occurred two or three years later, when she married Jack Linnet, to whom she had been engaged for some time.

So Jack Linnet wrote his sad letter, with Sister Mary Agnes' help, telling in as gentle a manner as possible of the double bereavement which had fallen to that father's and mother's lot.

In writing of Anna's death he simply said, "she died." Writing made it all the more easy to say little on a subject which could not be entered into: for how tell them that a daughter of theirs had come by her death by drowning, and by her own free will? And so only a few words served to tell the tale.

"But that isn't near all the trouble," Jack wrote; "tidings have reached us of my Milly's sister, and I can't hide it from you—it's bad, very bad news; not long ago, dear father and mother, she died—Anna died—and now there isn't no one left but my little Pollie, my old mother, and me."

Then, after an interval, came the answer back, and a very sorrowing one it was. But the pride which had forbidden

the mention of the elder daughter's name for all those nine years, now prevented the father, who had been so greatly disappointed, from saying more than a few words respecting that daughter who had so disappointed him.

Naturally, too, the letter being addressed to the husband of the younger daughter, there was more reference to the wife in it than to the sister-in-law. That the blow had been a heavy one might plainly be perceived by the broken sentences, the trembling writing; while in the postscript came the most touching part of all: "Oh, tell me what she died of, my Anna! Our hearts are breaking, mine and the father's, for all he writes so bravely! But oh! to lose them both at once!" It was the poor stricken mother who wrote the words, but how answer her?

Later on, when the shock was a little softened down, came another letter, in which was suggested a plan which did not meet with approval from Tiny Pollie's many friends, for this plan was that the little one should be sent to live with her grandparents in America.

This could easily be managed, Mrs. Lane wrote, for friends of hers and her husband's were on the eve of starting for a visit to England, and if Mrs. Linnet were willing to part with Pollie, would undertake the charge of her when they returned to their American home.

Happily, there was plenty of time for consideration, as

these friends were only now on their way, and intended (so the letter said) remaining two or three months in England.

There were some reasons which made the proposed arrangement desirable, but there was also much to be said against it. In the first place, taking it into consideration that the widow was daily becoming more and more infirm, it would on that account be a good plan for Pollie to be under the care of her younger grandmother; yet, on the other hand, if she remained in England, she would be able to see her father from time to time, while in America this would be an impossibility.

It was Pollie herself who decided the matter. When the subject was mentioned to her for the first time, the distress of the little thing was so great that it was settled then and there that she should stay.

It was Sister Mary Agnes who suggested it to her, and she was touched to see the child turn pale, and a scared look come into the big brown eyes. Then, springing down from her lap where she had been sitting, and looking up into her face, Pollie said, slowly,—

- "Do you mean, will I leave my Gran?"
- "Yes, dear, I'm afraid I do mean that."

The colour rushed back into the child's face, then she flew across the cottage floor, and throwing herself into her grandmother's arms, and clasping her hands tightly round the old woman's neck she cried,—

"Oh, Gran, Gran, you won't let them take me away from you! I can't go, Granny, oh, I can't! I can't! I can't!"

"No one shall take you from me, my darlin'," said the widow, and Pollie's sobs grew quieter. And thus it happened that no little Pollie left her Gran and the shores of England behind her in the America bound ship which carried the Lanes' friends back to their home.

Then after another little interval Jack Linnet sailed once more in the good ship "The Hardy Norseman," the captain, as Jack had surmised, having gladly consented to receive him again on board. I think verily his aged mother would indeed have felt lonely had it not been for her little child companion.

And now I must close my story with just one more incident respecting dear little Pollie. I am so sorry to part with her, and I hope that a few others, who have followed her little history for one short year, will be a little sorry too. Perhaps at some future time I may tell a little more about her, when she is a year or two older—who knows?

It was in the early part of the summer that Sister Mary Agnes effected a change with one of the other sisters from S. Agnes' Home, the Reverend Mother having sent to recall her for a time, while Sister Frances took her turn at the Cottage Hospital.

Having the day before bade farewell to her many friends, including the occupants of the almshouses, Sister Mary Agnes was a little surprised when, on the morning of her departure from Wendale, Pollie made her appearance, carrying a basket almost as big as herself, which she placed on the floor at Sister Mary Agnes' feet, in an evidently exhausted condition.

"Why, Pollie!" the Sister exclaimed, stooping to kiss the hot little face, "I didn't expect to see you again so soon. Did you carry that big basket all the way yourself?"

The basket was not really very large, but by the side of Tiny Pollie it looked so.

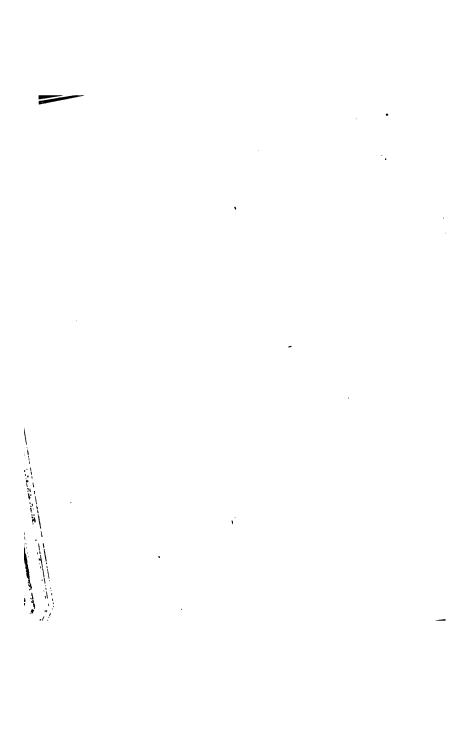
Pollie's only reply was to pull her little pocket handkerchief out of her little pocket, and regard it with intense thoughtfulness and gravity.

There was nothing very particular in its appearance to the casual observer, except that it was the blue one (I mean the one stitched with blue instead of pink) and that each corner was knotted in the neatest manner possible.

"What is that for?" the Sister said, smiling. She had lifted Pollie up into her lap, her favourite place, by this time. "What is that for?" and she pointed to one of the knots.

"To remind me, Sister," Pollie said, "there's five mes-





sages to remember, and that's a good many, you know. Four knots in my pocket-hankchief, and my hat on the wrong way, that makes five. I think p'raps I'd better begin, don't you, Sister?"

"Yes, indeed, Pollie, for do you know I can only spare you five minutes, this morning."

"Oh, then," and Pollie clasped her hands with a businesslike air on her lap, "first, my Gran says, 'Give my duty to Sister Mary Agnes, and I hope she'll have a good journey to London town.' Gran said 'London town,'" Pollie added, with a little laugh; "she says very funny things, sometimes, Granny does. Don't you think p'raps I'd better undo that knot now, 'cos it's done with, you know?"

"Yes, perhaps you had better. Mind, dear, you tell Granny that I'm much obliged to her."

"Ah! I think I'd better let it stay," Pollie said, and she tied the knot up again. "Yes, I'll tell her, but you mustn't tell me anything more just directly minute, please, 'cos there's nothing else to tie, and my boots are on the wrong feet already—that's 'cos I'm to call and get Gran's physic."

"Why, where did you learn such a queer way for remembering things?"

"I don't know, Sister, but I never could recollect till I thought I'd try this way. Oh, well then, next Granny says

there's a jar of honey from our own bee-hive, it's in the basket, and it's for you."

"Thank you very-"

"Oh please, Sister dear, wait a minute," Pollie interrupted her to say, "that's only two, and I'm so 'fraid I shall forget! Oh! and we got a letter this morning from father, and he's got all the way to—to—you know where he meant to go," said the child, finding the name beyond her capabilities; and then, as she put her precocious little head thoughtfully on one side, she gave utterance to the philosophical remark which has given to my story its title, "Don't you think it's all very up and down, Sister?"

"Up and down, dear? I don't quite know what you mean!"

"I mean everything, Sister: first of all, mother dies—that was a down, you know; then I came and lived with my Gran, that was an up; then my dear Miss Clare died—that was down again; then father came home, not a bit dead—and that's an up. Oh, you know, I can't go on, it's all the same, very upy and downy, I think! Oh dear! it's the last knot, and I've forgot what it was!"

"Try the hat one—perhaps you will remember it after."

"Oh, I know! it's a message from me, this time—it's if, supposing you meet Selina Jane Finch anywhere in London, (she's gone to live there, you know) will you tell her I send

her my love, and my daddy wasn't drownded at all. Selina Jane is Mrs. Kelly's niece," Pollie added in explanation.

- "I'll tell her if I see her; but, Pollie, London is a great big place, and I don't think it very likely that I shall."
 - "Bigger than Seaweed Harbour?"
 - "Yes, a great deal bigger."
- "Oh dear! and, Sister," here Pollie scrambled into a kneeling position on the Sister's lap, then giving her a little hug, and shaking her brown hair out of her eyes, she whispered in her ear, "in the basket, Sister, there's a cross and crown—I've made them all myself with wild flowers, and some Miss Edna gave me; and, please, they are to put on little cousin Neddie's and Dickey's graves."

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